

# The Scouts of the Silvermine

By GEORGE MITCHELL

## Silent Sleeping Endorsed by the Scouts.

**N**OW that Fort Slim was erected and a proved success outside, the boys set about making the inside habitable. The site on which it was built had been selected not so much by them as by George the Mule. If George had known as much about "muleing" as he did about picking a site for a camp, he would have been entitled to Honorable Mention in the Stall of Fame, for no better spot could have been found had they searched the forty-eight states. A brook chattered noisily within fifty feet of their rear elevation, giving them sparkling drinking water and plenty of fish. With two such fishermen as Bait to supply the necessary hookworms and Freckles to see that the fish patronized them, the boys had no worry about food. There was shade in abundance, bathing facilities and a snug indoors for wet weather. "It's what a snug rug is to a bug," said Squak, "only more so."

But although the cabin was finished, there was still much to be done to make things sanitary, such as drainage. A trench had been dug about the cabin to carry off extra rainfall. Squak wanted a moat and portcullis to ward off invasion. "We can throw a dam across the river and deflect the water into our moat," said he, "and raise the portcullis at night to be safe." (Paul cut in with "from the chipmunk hordes burning us at the stake.")

At the word "stake" Governor Slim came to life. "That reminds me," said he, "that I'm hungry," and arising to his gubernatorial feet he issued a proclamation assigning the next hour to "interior decoration."

"As Guv'nor," said Paul, "you ought to appoint yourself Secretary of the Interior." This proposition was put to a vote and carried 4 to 1, Slim arguing against what he considered a slur upon the dignity of his office. "As Guv'nor," said he, "I haven't any more authority than a small boy in a large family."

Lunch over, a drain was made to carry off impurities in the little stream and a well was dug that their drinking water might filter through the earth.

Inside the Fort nothing as yet had been supplied in the way of furniture, and much was needed, for the cabin was as bare as old Mrs. Hubbard's cupboard. Bait voted for separate and sound-proof bedrooms. "From what I know of you fellows," said he, "I could gain three or four hours' sleep a night if I didn't hear so much of you."

Now, if there is one thing that a boy doesn't want

to hear about himself it is that he snores. Instant indignation was therefore voiced by his companions, and Bait found he had stirred up a hornet's nest. "I tell you what," said Bait, "let's establish a rule that any fellow who snores loud enough to waken any other fellow makes of himself a public nuisance and thereby forfeits his franchise and sleeps outdoors." "Suppose it's raining?" asked Paul. "Doesn't make any difference," returned Bait. "A wet night's too good for him."

This discussion settled, the interior of the cabin was divided as follows: At one end five sleeping cots, to be used in cold or wet weather; at the other end a combination living and dining room—a lean-to to be built off the dining-room to serve as kitchen. Work was at once begun—axes were brought into play and small wood cut from fallen trees, each man to cut



and make his own cot, which, to save floor space, was to hinge against the wall so that the cot might fold down and the two legs up, to be out of the way in the daytime. Leather and nails were needed for these, and Paul volunteered to hike to the village if the others would cut his cot for him. Agreed. So Paul set out, and when he had done the six miles everything was set and waiting.

Next springs were woven of smaller branches, intertwined and covered with such softer material as they could find. "It's like making a nest, only more so," said Squak. And now, as luck would have it, rain began to fall, and furnished an excuse to sleep in their new